CATALOGUES OF ART EXHIBITIONS ORGANIZED BY THE ARTS COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN REPUBLISHED ON MICROFICHE

Published on microfiche by:

Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
45 South Street
Bishops Stortford
Herts CM23 3AG
England

Somerset House
417 Maitland Avenue
Teaneck
New Jersey 07666
USA

Date of publication and production of master: 1975

Series: The purpose of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text or their illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers.

Serial numbers: Each title is given a seven-figure serial number placed in the top right hand corner of the microfiche title strip. This is an accession number. The first figure indicates the number of the list in which the title first appears; the first three-figure group signifies the gallery or museum; the second three-figure group the accession number for that title.

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Technical data:

Producing laboratory: Micromedia Ltd, Kidlington, Oxford

Illustrated on cover
3
Working model for reclining figure (internal and external forms) 1951

Places of showing

19 April – 10 May 1969	Derby, Museum and Art Gallery
17 May – 7 June	Coventry, Herbert Art Gallery
14 June – 5 July	Stroud, George Room
12 July – 2 August	Welwyn Garden City, Gordon Maynard Gallery
9 – 30 August	Carlisle, Public Library Museum and Art Gallery
6 – 27 September	Southend, Beecroft Art Gallery
4 – 25 October	Beaford, The Beaford Centre
1 – 22 November	Winchester, The College
29 November 1969 – 24 January 1970	Isle of Man, Manx Museum
31 January – 21 February	Portsmouth, Cumberland House
28 February – 21 March	London, St. Paul's School
25 April – 16 May	Bideford, Burton Gallery
23 May – 13 June	Gillingham, Central Library

Henry Moore

Sculpture and drawings
from the Arts Council collection

Arts Council 1969/70

Foreword

The works in the present exhibition were acquired for the Council's collection during the period 1963-65 with the intention of assembling a small but representative exhibition. We were exceedingly fortunate to have had the close collaboration of Henry Moore himself in this project. We are also indebted to Robert Melville for the perceptive introduction which he has written for our catalogue.

Gabriel White
Director of Art

The Henry Moore Travelling Exhibition
by Robert Melville

A few years ago, Henry Moore said in an interview given to an American writer, 'for me sculpture is based on and remains close to the human figure'. He has said the same thing again and again in different ways. 'The human figure is both the most exacting subject one can set oneself and the subject one knows best.' 'Long and intense study of the human figure is the necessary foundation for a sculptor.' 'The human figure is what interests me most deeply.'

The great sheaf of early drawings devoted to monumental studies of the naked model testify to his 'long and intense study of the human figure', and throughout his career the dominant subject of his sculpture has been the reclining female figure. So on the face of it, the Arts Council might seem to have gone out of its way to find examples of his sculpture which are non-human. Of the nine works which it has brought together there are perhaps two – three at most – which declare at first glance some connection with human appearance. The least ambiguous example is *Head of a king* (5), a unique cast of the male head in the famous bronze group called *King and Queen*. It has been described by the sculptor himself as 'a combination of a crown, beard and face symbolizing a mixture of primitive kingship and a kind of animal, Pan-like quality'. It's a superbly imaginative invention which brings before us an archaic presence steeped in magic and myth and conveys a sense of the terrorism at the heart of the divine right of kings.

It's evident from an amusing remark that Moore addressed to the American interviewer that he was not thinking about a strictly visual connection between the sculptural image and the human figure. 'If', he said, 'we had the shape of cows and went about on four legs, the whole basis of sculpture would be entirely different.' A cow, after all, doesn't know what she herself 'looks like'; she has no data for assuming that she is the same shape as the other cows she sees in the field; her recognition of another member of the species is dependent upon other senses – and Moore is saying in his cryptic way not only that our sense of the human figure is the product of many faculties but that our awareness of human shape is a pervasive influence on our perceptions. So it's not surprising that Moore's forms always have an organic significance. A seemingly 'pure' abstract like *Sculptural object* (8) assumes a muscular vitality. In *Stringed figure* (2), the strings are lines of communication between the forms; an image of the nervous system. *Knife-edge two piece* (9), with its gently undulating surfaces, is an image of living matter before it takes creature form, an image of originative substance, beautifully formed to suggest the unformed.

The statement by Moore which begins: 'The human figure is what interests me most deeply', is followed by a 'but.' 'But', he says, 'I have found principles of form and rhythm from the study of natural objects, such as pebbles, rocks, bones, trees, plants'. He is not saying that he makes

sculptural likenesses of pebbles, rocks and so on. His sculptures are three-dimensional percepts, products of the act of perceiving which are not to be confused with the thing perceived. There is a powerful bias in Moore's studies of natural objects which springs from his awareness of human shape. Take, for instance, the *Composition* (1) of 1934, which is a bronze cast of a carving in reinforced concrete and one of the works in the exhibition which seems most remote from human associations. Its title in the oeuvre catalogue of Moore's sculpture is *Four Piece Composition,* and it consists of four elements (two of them joined but obviously conceived separately) which bear no resemblance to human parts; they are abstract forms based on the study of natural objects. But their disposition on the rectangular slab is not arbitrary, and the guiding principle here is the posture of his reclining figures. Once this is acknowledged, one begins to perceive references to head, breast and raised knee, and it becomes evident that the egg-like form placed at some distance from the other forms marks the place where the feet would be.

I am reminded by the two sheets devoted to drawings of shells that one of his reclining figures is clad in a skirt of shell, but the shell considered as a protective cladding has had a much more wide-ranging influence on his forms than that. One can detect it in the bronze called *Helmet head no. 3* (7), where the protective outer form is clearly associated with armour but has a more organic shape which implies that, like the hard back of a crustacean, it is not detachable; and like the human face, it partly conceals and partly betrays. But *Working model for reclining figure* (3), conceptually related to *Helmet Head,* gathers in many more associations. At one and the same time it is a two piece reclining figure and a foetus in its protective womb. But its meaning is symbolically all-embracing, ranging up and down the scale of creation, from the mollusc in its shell and the animal in its burrow to 'body and soul, world and man'.*

A two-way evolutionary process is at work in Moore's shaping of sculptural forms. Natural objects tend to refer to the human figure, and the human figure tends to refer to natural objects. His profound interest in natural objects is perhaps an inheritance from that host of 19th century Englishmen who turned to Natural Philosophy and examined the wonders of nature in the expectation of multiplying the evidence of divine purpose. His reclining female figures are in a sense nature goddesses. He perceives the natural world as a complex of metaphors for the image of woman. Reclining, she is like the lie of the land, and whether mountainous or deep-mined, geometrically withdrawn or biomorphically eloquent, she enfolds all created things.

*Edrich Neumann, *The Archetypal World of Henry Moore,* New York 1959

Chronology

1898	Born at Castleford, Yorkshire. His father was a coal-miner.
1917-19	War service.
1919	Entered Leeds School of Art.
1921	Awarded a scholarship which enabled him to study at the Royal College of Art in London.
1923	First visit to Paris.
1924	Appointed instructor in the Sculpture School at the Royal College of Art.
1925	Travelled in France and Italy.
1928	First one-man exhibition at the Warren Gallery, London. Began work on his first public commission – a relief carving for the façade of the new Underground station, St. James's Park.
1929	Married Irina Radetzky.
1930	Elected to the 7 and 5 Society (1920-35). Members in the thirties included Nicholson, Hepworth, Hitchens and Piper.
1932	Moved from the Royal College of Art to Chelsea School of Art to establish a sculpture department there.
1933	Member of Unit 1, founded by Paul Nash. Other members included Hepworth, Armstrong, Burra, Nicholson and Wadsworth.
1934	First monograph on his work by Herbert Read.
1936	Tour of cave paintings in the Pyrenees and at Altamira. Exhibited in the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries.
1940	Moved from London to Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, where he has lived since.
1941	First retrospective exhibition at Temple Newsam, Leeds.
1947	Gave up teaching.
1948	Awarded the international sculpture prize at the 24th Venice Biennale.
1951	Retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery arranged by the Arts Council. First visit to Greece.
1953	First visit to Mexico.
1955	Created Companion of Honour.
1960	Exhibition of sculpture 1950-60 at the Whitechapel Gallery, London.
1963	Awarded Order of Merit. Started work on the large two piece reclining figure for Lincoln Center, New York.
1965	Worked on a large abstract bronze for the forecourt of the new museum by Mies van der Rohe in Berlin.
1968	Large retrospective exhibition in honour of his seventieth birthday arranged by the Arts Council at the Tate Gallery.

Some widely available books

Philip James (editor)	*Henry Moore on sculpture* published by Macdonald
Herbert Read	*Henry Moore* published by Thames & Hudson
David Sylvester	*Henry Moore* published by the Arts Council of Great Britain (catalogue of a retrospective exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1968)

The third volume of the complete catalogue of the artist's work *Henry Moore, Sculpture and Drawings*, published by Lund Humphries in 1965, contains an extensive bibliography.

Catalogue

Catalogue note

Measurements are given in inches. In the case of drawings height precedes width. The reference (HM plus number) after the entry is to the complete catalogue of the artist's sculpture *Henry Moore, Sculpture and Drawings*, vol. 1 1921-48, vol. 2 1949-54, vol. 3 1955-64, Lund Humphries, London, 1957, 1965, 1965.

Sculpture

1
Composition 1934
Bronze (cast 1961 from original reinforced concrete)
Length 16¾
HM 140

2
Stringed figure 1938
Bronze (cast 1960)
Length 14

3
Working model for reclining figure (internal and external forms) 1951
Bronze (extra cast, original edition of 8)
Length 21
HM 298

4
Time/Life screen, working model 1952
Bronze (edition of 9)
Height 15, length 39¾
HM 343

5
Head of a king 1952-53
Bronze (unique cast made in 1962)
Height 22½
HM 351

6
Head: lines 1955
Bronze (edition of 7)
Height 11¾
HM 397

7
Helmet head no: 3 1960
Bronze (edition of 12)
Height 11½
HM 467

8
Sculptural object 1960
Bronze (edition of 10)
Height 18¼
HM 469

9
Working model for knife-edge two piece 1962
Bronze (edition of 10)
Length 28
HM 504

Drawings

10
Ideas for 'North Wind' (relief on St. James's Park Underground station) 1927
Pen and wash 15 × 10

11
Study for 'figure in concrete' 1929
Black chalk 12 × 9

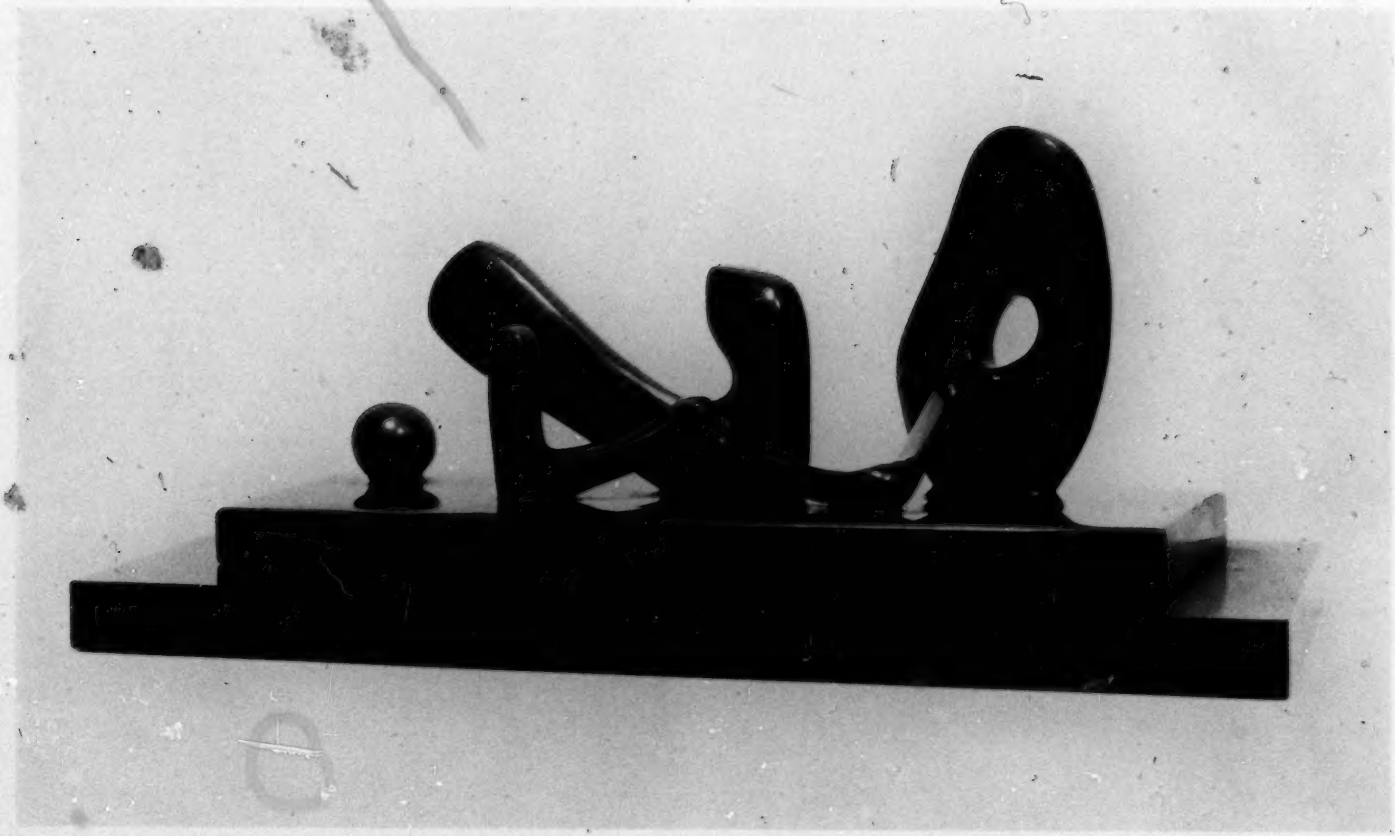
12
Transformations of bones 1931
Pencil 9 × 8 (two sheets)

13
Shells 1932
Pencil 10 × 7 (two sheets)

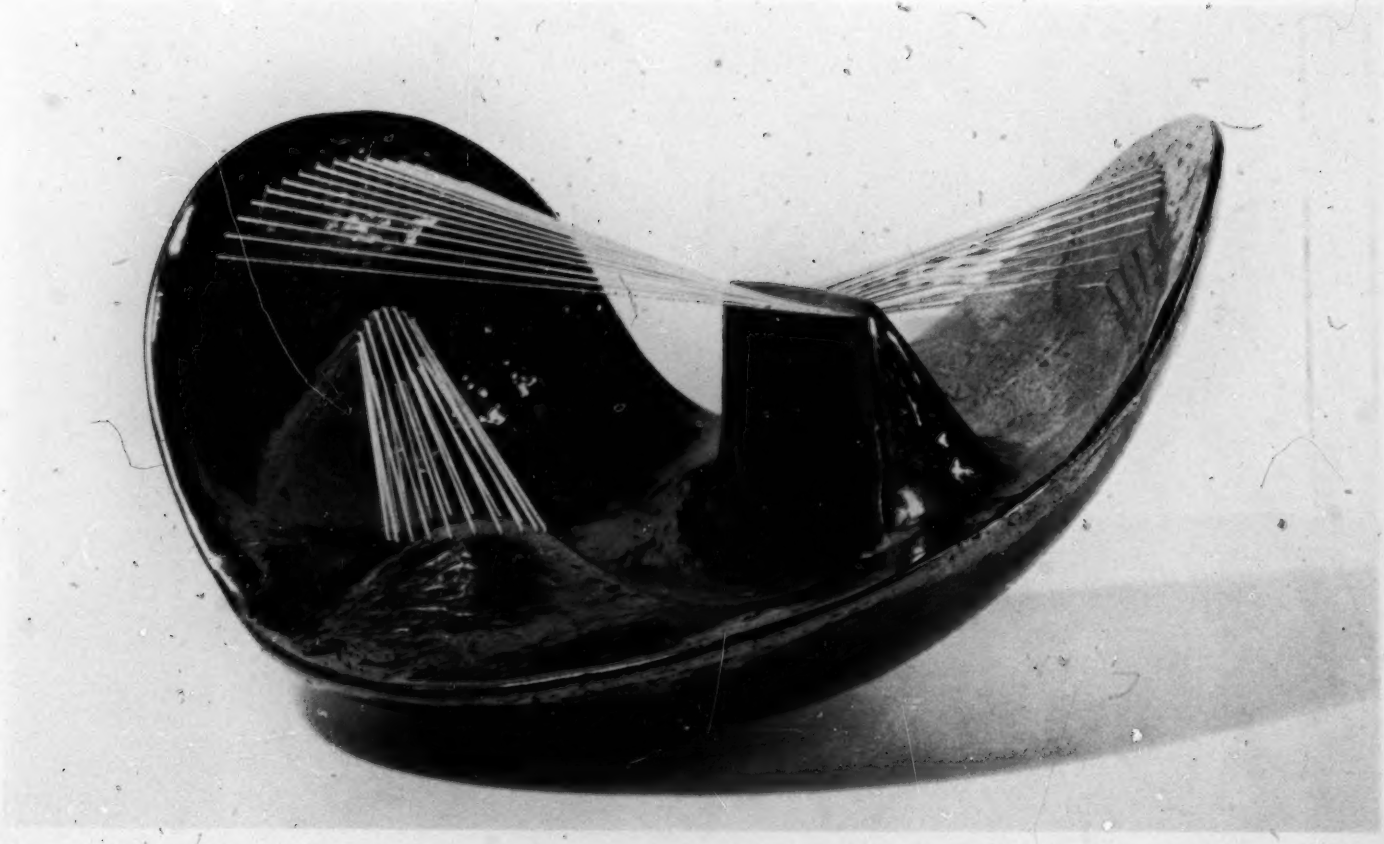
14
Ideas for sculpture 1932
Wash 14 × 10

15
Stone forms 1934
Black chalk 19 × 14

1
Composition 1934

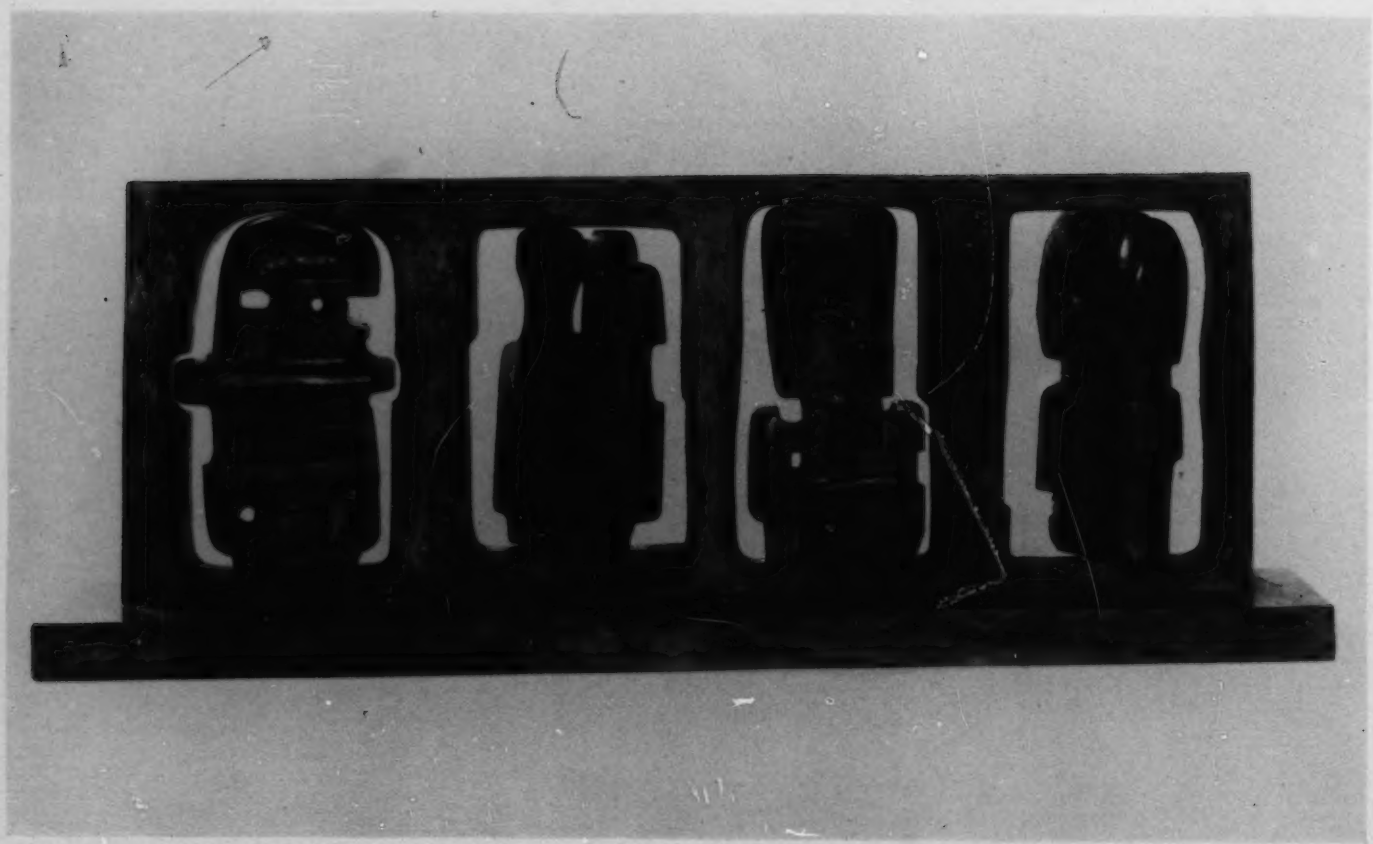


2
Stringed figure 1938



Henry Moore

4
Time/Life screen, working model 1952



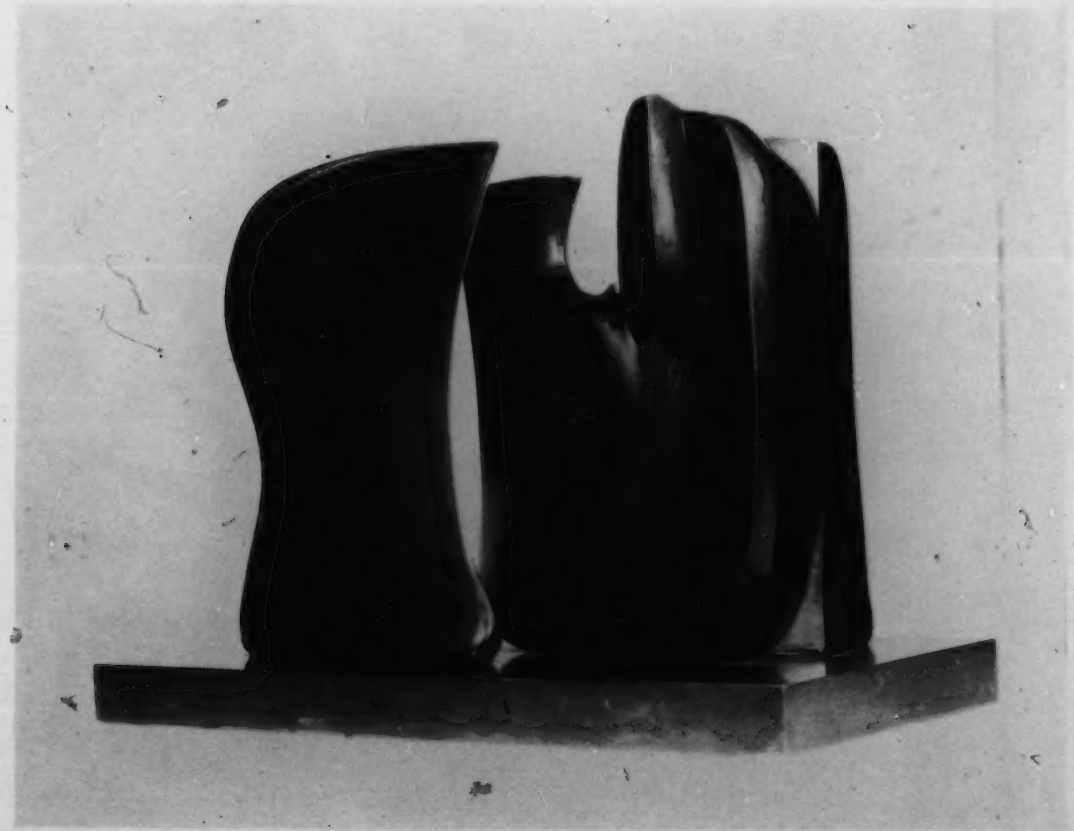
5
Head of a king 1952-53

6
Head: lines 1955

7
Helmet head no. 3 1960

8
Sculptural object 1960

9
Working model for knife-edge two piece, 1962



A list of Arts Council publications, including all exhibition catalogues in print, can be obtained from the Publications Department, Arts Council of Great Britain, 105 Piccadilly, London W1V OAU

Published by
The Arts Council of Great Britain
Printed in England by
Tillotsons (Bolton) Ltd
Designed by Gordon House
Photographs by Brompton Studio